

CALFED
BAY-DELTA
PROGRAM

NEWS...

Issue #4, March 1998

Public Review Period Begins

A 75-day public review period begins March 16 and ends June 1 with the release of the CALFED Bay-Delta Program's draft programmatic Environmental Impact Statement/ Environmental Impact Report, the most comprehensive effort to date addressing the environmental and water management problems of the Bay-Delta system.

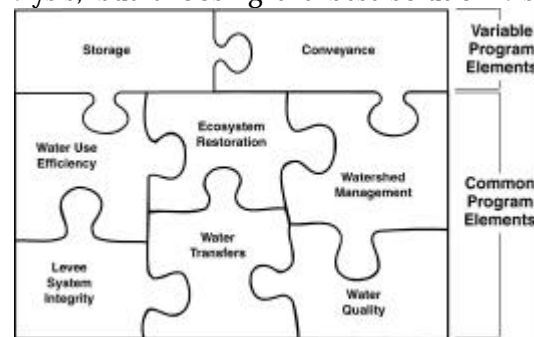
"This is an important milestone, but the real work is just beginning," says Lester Snow, CALFED executive director. "This document lays out very broad actions. Only after we get consensus on the general approach can we begin to look at specific issues associated with sites, cost and other impacts."

The draft programmatic EIS/EIR identifies potential impacts associated with the hundreds of proposed actions contained in CALFED's Bay-Delta solution. Once public comments are incorporated, a final document will be submitted to CALFED for certification in late 1998. Then, individual, detailed environmental analysis will be conducted on actions prior to implementation.

Phase II Interim Report Now Available

In addition to the technically oriented draft programmatic EIS/EIR, CALFED has prepared a Phase II Interim Report, a 150-page overview of the decision-making process, fundamental program concepts, solution principles and analysis of the comparative technical advantages of each alternative. The Phase II Interim Report is intended to help those who want to participate in the public review process gain a better understanding of the key issues on the table. "There are some hard decisions that need to be made over the coming months," says Lester Snow,

CALFED executive director. "We've done the technical analysis, but choosing the best solution also requires analysis of a more subjective nature, namely, what trade offs are people willing to make for a healthy environment and reliable water supply."



Potential solutions are made up of six Program elements common to each alternative and two Program elements that vary from alternative to alternative

See page four for how to order the Phase II Interim Report.

Public Hearings Scheduled...

CALFED will hold 12 public hearings throughout California to solicit public input. See inside for details.

Common Programs Form Foundation for Solution

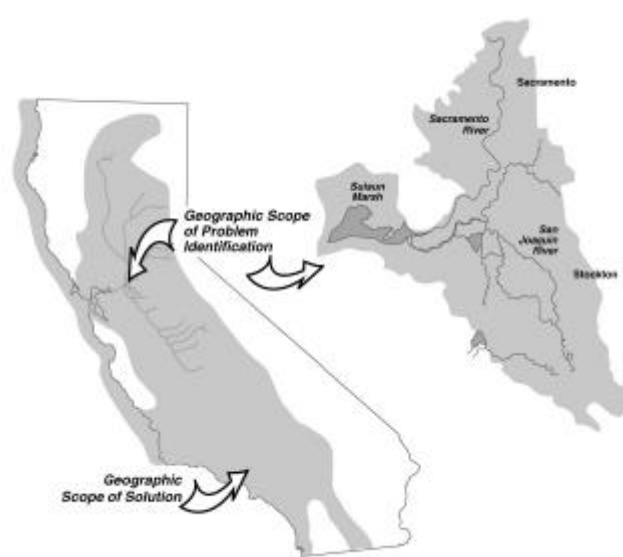
During Phase I of the Program it became clear that some types of actions were so fundamental to the system's recovery that they should be included in whichever solution was chosen. These actions were separated into four Common Programs: ecosystem restoration, water use efficiency, water quality and levee system integrity. During Phase II, two additional Common Programs evolved from the original four because of their value in helping CALFED meet multiple objectives. They are water transfers and watershed management.

"The Common Programs represent a significant investment in the Bay-Delta system and will help substantially reduce resource conflicts," says Lester Snow, CALFED executive director. "Each one represents a major program of its own. Together, they are the foundation for our solution."

These six Common Programs remain relatively unchanged in each of the three potential solutions contained in the draft PEIS/PEIR. The three alternatives do differ, however, in how each would move and store water in the system. Alternative 1 would consider storage and make small improvements to the channel configurations of the Delta. Alternative 2 includes additional storage and would make significant improvements to the channels in the Delta. Alternative 3 is similar to Alternative 2, except it also adds a new channel around the east side of the Delta.

"Although our technical analysis of each alternative has been completed, we do not feel we have enough public input on the key trade offs to be made with each alternative," says Snow. "That's why we decided to release all of our analyses and let the public weigh in on what they think makes the most sense for California's future." Examples of trade-offs are:

- Is the construction of major new water projects acceptable to the public, regardless of technical merit?
- Are beneficiaries, i.e. the general public, water users, various regions, willing to pay for the parts of the solution that serve their interests?
- Can CALFED devise adequate mechanisms to assure the Program is implemented as agreed by all stakeholders?



- What is the appropriate balance of in-Delta water quality improvements and improvements to export water quality?

A full description of the key trade-off issues is contained in the Phase II Report, available by calling 916-657-2666.

Intensive Orientation Session Planned

A comprehensive orientation session will be held Friday, April 3, from 9 a.m. to noon, at the Sacramento Convention Center, to give interested members of the public an overview of the draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report. CALFED technical staff who prepared the draft document will lead the session. "We want to be sure that our stakeholders have all the information they need to participate in the public review process," says Lester Snow, CALFED executive director. In addition to a review of the various sections contained in the environmental document and its appendices, the session will allow ample time for questions and answers. It is free and open to the public. No registration is required. For additional information, please call 916-657-2666.